

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9979
INFO USMISSION USUN NIACT IMMEDIATE
USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 3115

AF FOR AMBASSADOR EASUM

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, PFOR, ILO, NI, US
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE DISCUSSION OF LABOR MATTERS BETWEEN AMBASSADOR
YOUNG AND COMMISSIONER GARBA

REF:STATE 059576

1. COMEXTAFF GARBA NOW PLANS DEPART LAGOS VIA NIGERIAN AIRWAYS
SUNDAY 3/20. PRESUMABLY WILL OVERNIGHT LONDON AND ARRIVE NEW YORK
AFTERNOON 3/21. GARBA HOPES SPEAK IN SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEBATE
3/22 AND GO TO WASHINGTON FOR MEETING WITH THE SECRETARY 3/23.

2. PRESUMABLY MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR YOUNG COULD BE FITTED INTO
THIS SCHEDULE, AND WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE DESIRABLE, PARTI-
CULARLY TO MAINTAIN WARMTH AND MOMENTUM OF DIALOGUE. IN THIS
CONTEXT, HOWEVER, WE QUESTION
ADVISABILITY OF AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S PURSUING MORE THAN BROAD
PRINCIPLES OUR POSITION RE ILO.

A. WE DO NOT REPEAT NOT BELIEVE HE SHOULD RAISE QUESTION OF SAFETY
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OF NIGERIAN LABOR LEADERS, AS THERE IS NO SIGN OF INTENT TO DO
THEM PHYSICAL HARM, AND FMG WOULD BE SURE TO TAKE OFFENSE.

B. DISCUSSION OF OVERALL US VIEWS AND STANCE RE ILO WOULD BE
USEFUL, AS GARBA WAS NOT IN LAGOS TO HEAR PRESENTATION BY DANIEL
HOROWITZ IN JANUARY.

C. WE BELIEVE COMPLEXITIES OF NIGERIAN LABOR SITUATION WOULD NOT LEND THEMSELVES TO BRIEF DISCUSSION, AND WE SEE LITTLE PROSPECT OF DEFLACTING FMG FROM COURSE ITS INTERNAL POLICIES.

D. DOUBT THAT FMG PLANS FOR JUNE ILO GENERAL CONFERENCE IN GENEVA HAVE JELLED YET, BUT IF AMBASSADOR YOUNG WERE TO ASK ABOUT THIS, SOME LIGHT MIGHT BE SHED ON REPORTS CITED PARA 1 REFTEL. NIGERIAN ASPIRATION TO LEADERSHIP ROLE WOULD BE IN CHARACTER; AF LABOR ADVISOR SLEZAK CONFIRMED IN ACCRA 18 MARCH THAT GHANAIAAN COMMISSIONER FOR LABOR AMEDUME NOW ACTIVELY CAMPAIGNING FOR SUPPORT AS AFRICAN CANDIDATE FOR ILO GENERAL CONFERENCE PRESIDENCY. AFRICAN CHOICE IS TO BE MADE AT TRIPOLI LABOR MINISTERIAL MEETING.

3. WHAT IS DEPARTMENT'S ASSESSMENT OF REPORT FMG PLANS PURSUE POSITIONS UNHELPFUL TO US; WE WOULD BE INTERESTED TO LEARN WHICH SPECIFIC ISSUES MIGHT BE INVOLVED.

4. MEANWHILE, WE ARE IN PROCESS OF GATHERING INFORMATION ON NIGERIAN PREPARATIONS FOR TRIPOLI LABOR MINISTRY MEETING AND ILO GENERAL CONFERENCE AND WILL REPORT.

5. BY WAY OF GENERAL BACKGROUND, PRIME PROBLEM HERE IS ONE OF LABOR MOVEMENT'S FREEDOM FROM GOVERNMENT CONTROL AND THE LEGITIMACY OF FMG ACTIONS VIS-A-VIS ILO CONVENTIONS. FMG HAS DISESTABLISHED FOUR MAJOR NIGERIAN LABOR CONFEDERATIONS, REFUSED PERMIT NEW OVERALL NATIONAL BODY (NIGERIAN LABOR CONGRESS) TO OPERATE; AND IS HALTINGLY REORGANIZING LABOR MOVEMENT WITH SO FAR LITTLE OR NO FORMAL CONSULTATION WITH TRADE UNIONISTS.
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GOVERNMENT HAS FORBIDDEN LOCAL TRADE UNION BODIES FROM HAVING ANY DEALINGS WITH FOREIGN LABOR ORGANIZATIONS EXCEPT ILO AND ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN TRADE UNION UNITY (BAN INCLUDES DEALINGS WITH AFL-CIO'S AFRICAN AMERICAN LABOR CENTER WHICH HAD SIGNIFICANT PROGRAM HERE) ON GROUNDS THAT OUTSIDE IDEOLOGIES AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT CAUSED DIVISIONS IN LABOR MOVEMENT IN PAST. RECENT PROSCRIPTION OF LABOR LEADERS WAS BASED ON MISMANAGEMENT OF TRADE UNIONS BY LEADERS BUT REPRESENTS IMPINGEMENT ON WORKERS FREEDOM SELECT THEIR LEADERS. GOVERNMENT APPOINTED WORKERS DELEGATES TO ILO GENERAL CONFERENCE LAST SUMMER AND, ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL TRAVEL BAN IMPOSED, NIGERIAN WORKER REPRESENTATIVE CHIEF E.O. ODEYEMI (ONE OF THE PROSCRIBEDS) FAILED TO ATTEND MOST RECENT ILO GOVERNNING BODY MEETING. FMG HAS SHOWN SIGNS CONCERN THAT THESE INFRINGEMENTS COULD BE MADE ISSUE IN ILO.
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